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AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE

Remarkable COMET,

Don — WHOSE *Winn*

Appearance is expected at the End of this present
Year 1757, or at the beginning of 1758.



[Price One Shilling.]

ACCOUNT

OF THE

REVENUE COMMISSIONERS

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[Price One Shilling]

AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE ^{7th}
Remarkable COMET,

WHOSE

Appearance is expected at the End of this present
Year 1757, or at the Beginning of 1758:

WITH THE

DREADFUL EFFECTS that may probably
happen by its near Approach to the Earth's
Orbit.

LIKEWISE

OBSERVATIONS on the other two remarka-
ble Comets, which are expected to appear in the
Years 1789, 2255.

The whole illustrated with Reflections on the GENERAL
CONFLAGRATION, &c. &c.

*The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea all, which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like the baseless fabrick of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.—*

SHAKESPEAR.

L O N D O N:

Printed in the YEAR MDCCCLVII.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE REMARKABLE COMET,

WHICH
APPEARED IN THE YEAR 1770,
AND WAS OBSERVED AT THE END OF THE PRESENT
CENTURY, OR BEGINNING OF THE NEXT.

BY
JAMES FARRER, ESQ. who probably
discovered it, as may appear from the account
given.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
THE SECOND VOLUME, containing the account of the
comet, which was expected to appear in the
Year 1780, 1790, &c.

The whole printed and sold by the Author,
at the Sign of the Anchor, in the Strand.

The Author's name, James Farrer, Esq.
The place, London, in the Strand, at the
Sign of the Anchor, in the Strand.
The year, 1770, or thereabouts, as
the comet was first seen.
The comet was first seen in the
Year 1770, or thereabouts, as
the comet was first seen.

L O N D O N
Printed in the Year MDCCCLXX.



P R E F A C E.

THE following Account being the substance of what the greatest philosophers have advanced concerning Comets, both from experience and observation; it may not be improper here as a Preface, nor unacceptable to the reader, to annex a few reflections on those uncommon objects, and on the almighty God, the Creator of such wonderful beings.

Curiosity is the thirst of the soul; it inflames and torments us, and makes us taste every thing with joy, however otherwise insipid, by which it may be quenched: and this passion has prompted men in all times to study nature; every useful art has some connexion with this science; and the unexhausted beauty and variety of things makes it ever agreeable, new, and surprizing.

To study nature is to search into the workmanship of the Author and Governor of the universe: every new discovery opens to us a new part of his scheme. And while we still meet in our enquiries, with hints of greater things yet undiscovered, the mind is kept in a pleasing expectation of making a further progress; acquiring

ring at the same time higher conceptions of that great Being, whose works are so various and hard to be comprehended.

To mention only the Comet of 1680, which travelled in a much greater degree of swiftness than a cannon-ball, and drew after it a tail of fire that was fourscore millions of miles in length.—What an amazing thought is it, to consider such a stupendous body traversing the immensity of the creation with such a rapidity, and at the same time wheeling about in that line which the Almighty had prescribed for it! that it should move in such an inconceivable fury and combustion, and at the same time with such an exact regularity! How spacious must the universe be, that gives such bodies as these their full play, without suffering the least disorder and confusion by it! What a glorious shew are those beings entertained with, that can look into this great theatre of nature, and see myriads of such tremendous objects wandering through those immeasurable depths of *æther*, and running their appointed courses! Our eyes may hereafter be strong enough to command this magnificent prospect, and our understandings able to find out the several uses of these great parts of the universe. In the mean time they are very proper objects for our imaginations to contemplate, that we form more exalted notions of infinite wisdom and power, and learn to think humbly of ourselves, and of all the little works of human invention.

and

It is from the works of God, we are to seek to know God, and not to pretend to mark out the scheme of his conduct, in nature from the imperfect ideas we are able to form of that great mysterious Being. Thus the study of natural philosophy may become a sure basis to natural religion: by them we may mount from this dull earth, and viewing it from on high, consider whether nature has laid out all her cost and finery upon this small speck of dirt. So, like travellers into other distant countries, we shall be better able to judge of what's done at home, know how to make a true estimate of, and set its own value upon every thing. We shall be less apt to admire what this world calls Great, shall nobly despise those trifles the generality of men set their affections on, and we shall worship and reverence that God the maker of all these things: we shall admire and adore his providence and wonderful wisdom which is displayed and manifested all over the universe, to the confusion of those who would have the earth and all things formed by the shuffling concourse of atoms, and to be without beginning.

It is from the works of God, we are to seek to know God, and not to pretend to mark out the scheme of his conduct, in nature from the imperfect ideas we are able to form of that great mysterious Being. Thus the study of natural philosophy, may become a sure basis to a true religion: for then we may receive from this full earth, and viewing it from so high a point of view, whether nature has laid out all her gifts and bounties upon the human race, or that she has reserved some other distant countries, we shall be better able to judge of what's done at home, know how to make a true estimate of, and be less apt to admire what the world calls Great. We shall be still nobly despite those trifling propensities of men for the trifles of this world, and we shall worship and reverence God the maker of all these things: we shall admire and adore his providence and wisdom which is displayed and manifested all over the universe, to the confusion of those who would have the earth and all things formed by the shifting currents of atoms, and to be without beginning.



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BESIDES the planets, we find
in the expanse of heaven
many other bodies belong-
ing to the system of the sun,
that seem to have much more
irregular motions. These
are the Comets, which, de-
scending from the far distant
parts of the system with great rapidity, surprise
us with the singular appearance of a train, or
tail, which accompanies them; become visible
to us in the lower parts of their orbits, and, af-
ter

ter a short stay, are carried off again to vast distances, and disappear. Tho' some of the ancients had more just notions of them, yet the opinion having prevailed, that they were only meteors generated in the air, like those we see in it every night, and in a few moments vanishing, no care was taken to observe or record their phænomena accurately till of late. Hence this part of astronomy is very imperfect. The number of the Comets is far from being known: many have been noted by historians formerly, and not a few of late observed by astronomers; and some have been discovered accidentally by telescopes, passing by us, that never became visible to the naked eye: so that we may conclude their number to be very great. Their periods, magnitudes, and the dimensions of their orbits, are also uncertain. This is a part of science, the perfection of which may be reserved for some distant age, when these numerous bodies, and their vast orbits, by long and accurate observation, may be added to the known parts of the solar system. Astronomy will appear as a new science, after all the discoveries we now boast of: but then it will be remember'd even in those flourishing days of astronomy, that it was Sir ISAAC NEWTON who discovered and demonstrated the principles by which alone such great improvements could be made; and that he begun and carried this work so far, that he left posterity little more to do, but to observe the heavens, and compute after his models.

Dr. HALLEY, to whom every part of astronomy, but this in a particular manner, is highly
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indebted, has joined his labours to Sir ISAAC NEWTON on this subject, nor is it necessary here to separate them. Finding three observations of Comets recorded in history, agreeing with the Comets that appeared near the end of the year 1680, and in the beginning of 1681*, in remarkable circumstances, and returning at the distance of 575 years from each other, he suspected that these might be one and the same Comet, revolving in that period about the sun. He therefore supposed the *parabola* to be changed into such an excentric *ellipse* as the Comet might describe in 575 years, and as should nearly coincide with the parabola in its lowest part; and, having computed the places of the Comet in this elliptic orbit, he found them to agree so well with those in which the Comet was observed to pass, that the variations did not exceed the differences which are found betwixt the computed and the observed places of the planets, whose motions had been the subject of astronomical calculation for some thousand years. This Comet may, therefore, be expected again after finishing the same period, about the year 2255. If it then return, it will give a new lustre and evidence to Sir ISAAC NEWTON's philosophy, in that distant age. And should the inconstancy of human affairs, and the perpetual revolutions to which they are subject, occasion any neglect of our philosophy in the intervening ages, this Comet will revive it; and fill every mouth again with this great man's name. Nor need this be esteemed a vain prediction; for we cannot but suppose that the attention of the astro-

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nomers

* These were generally esteemed two different Comets.

nomers of those Days to this Comet must be raised to a great pitch, because in one part of its orbit it approaches very near to the orbit of our earth; so that, in some revolutions, it may approach near enough to have very considerable, if not fatal, effects upon it. Nor is it to be doubted, but that while so many Comets pass among the orbits of the planets, and carry such immense tails along with them, we should have been called, by very extraordinary consequences, to attend to these bodies long ago, if the motions in the universe had not been at first designed, and produced by a Being of sufficient skill to foresee their most distant consequences. Our earth was out of the way when this Comet last passed near her orbit; but it requires a perfect knowledge of the motion of the Comet, to be able to judge if it will always pass by us with so little effect. We may here observe, that these great periods and distant depending observations, promise this good effect, that they must contribute to preserve the relish for learning from the revolutions it has been formerly subject to. By them distant ages are connected together, and perpetual matter for reviving the curiosity of men is provided from time to time.

But we are not to wait for the return of this distant Comet to have these authors' theories verified, and to see predictions of this kind begin to take place. For comparing together the orbits of the Comets that appeared in 1607 and 1682, they are found so coincident, that we cannot but suppose them to be one and the same Comet, and has already appeared six times, viz. in the years 1305, 1380, 1456, 1531, and in the years above-mentioned, revolving

volving about the sun at the intervals of 75 and 76 years alternately; as is made very probable by the time of the appearance, the length of the period, the retrograde motion, the place of the perihelion, and nodes: the perihelion distance and the inclination of the orbit, being nearly the same in all: the small irregularities &c. being well accounted for by Dr. HALLEY; as also why the period of this Comet is at one time 75 years, and the next 76; and since the last period (viz. in 1682) was of 75 years, it is presumed the present period will contain 76 years, and therefore its next appearance will probably be in 1758.

But the time of its appearing is uncertain, and it may happen the latter end of the present year 1757, or the beginning, middle, or latter end of the next year. After 85 days it will attain to its perihelion, or be nearest of all to the sun; and after 130 days it will come to its descending node, at which time it will be very near the earth's orbit; and should that happen the 12th of May, we should be in a dangerous situation, as the denser part of its blazing tail would then envelop the earth.

If therefore this Comet return according to this period in 1758, (and there is the greatest reason to think it will) astronomy will then have something new to boast of. It seems to be of those that rise to the least height from the sun, its greatest distance being only 35 times greater than the distance of the earth from the sun; so that, at the farthest, it does not run out four times farther from us than *Saturn*. It will probably be the first that will be added to the number

ber of the revolving planets, and establish this part of Sir ISAAC NEWTON's theory.

Besides these Comets we have mentioned, Sir ISAAC NEWTON has considered the motions of several others, and finds his theory always consonant with observation. He particularly computes the places of a remarkable Comet that appeared in 1664 and 1665. It moved over 20° . in one day, and described almost six signs in the heavens before it disappeared, its course deviated from a great circle, towards the North, and its motion, that had been before retrograde, became direct towards the end: and notwithstanding so unusual a course, its places computed from this author's theory, agree with the observed places, as well as those of the planets agree with theirs.

The phænomena of all the Comets, but especially of the Comet of 1680, shew them to be solid, fixed and durable bodies. This Comet was, in its *perihelium*, 166 times nearer to the sun than our earth is; and, from this, Sir ISAAC NEWTON computes that it must have conceived a heat 2000 times greater than that of iron almost going into fusion, and that, if it was equal to our earth, and cooled in the same manner as terrestrial bodies, it would take 50,000 years to cool: to bear so prodigious a heat, it must surely be a very solid and fixed body*.

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* It is imagined of Comets that in their approaches towards the earth they cause diseases, famines, and other such like judgments of God. But this is only surmise, and what befalls the world at other times, without the visible approach of any Comet. But however, supposing that as Comets

There is a phænomenon that attends each Comet, and is peculiar to them, called its *tail*: some have imputed this appearance to the refraction of the sun beams, passing the nucleus or head, which they supposed to be transparent: others, to the refraction of the beams reflected from the head, as they pass through the intermediate spaces to us. Sir ISAAC NEWTON refutes both these opinions, and shews, that the tail consists of a vapour arising continually from the body of the Comet, towards those parts that are opposite to the sun, for a like reason that vapour or smoak rises in the atmosphere of the earth. Because of the motion of the body of the Comet, the tail is bent a little towards those parts which the Comet leaves in its motion. These tails are found greatest after it has passed its perihelium, or least distance from the sun, where its heat is greatest, and the atmosphere of the sun is most dense *. The tail of the Comet
of

Comets move in orbs very different from those of the other heavenly bodies; so their effects and influences may be as different; yet this may be, and no doubt is, (because it may be proved) with the concurrence, and by the appointment of the divine Providence; who, as governor of the world, might make such noxious globes to execute his justice, by affrighting and chastising sinful men, at their approaches to the earth; and not only so, but (as some have imagined) to be the place of their habitation and torment after death. And supposing it to be so, yet herein is a kind Providence manifested, that their returns to the earth are but seldom, and their stays short, that they take up many years in passing the rest of their orbs.

* Mr. ROWNING, who is not satisfied with Sir ISAAC's opinion, accounts for the tails of Comets in the following manner. It is well known, says he, that when the light of the sun passes through the atmosphere of any body, as the

of 1680 was of a prodigious size; it was extended from the head to a distance scarcely inferior to the vast distance of the sun from the earth. As the matter of the tail participates of the motion of the Comet, it is thereby carried along with the Comet in its motion, and some part of it returns again with it: and as the matter in the tail rises, it becomes more and more rarified; as appears from the tail's increasing in breadth upwards. By this rarefaction a great part of the tail must be dilated and diffused over the system; some of this, by its gravity, may fall towards the planets, mix with their atmospheres, and supply the fluids, which, in natural operations, are consumed; and may, perhaps, supply that subtile spirit in our air, which is necessary for the life of animals, and for other natural operations.

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the earth, that which passes on one side, is by the refraction thereof made to converge towards that which passes on the opposite one; and this convergency is not wholly effected either at the entrance of the light into the atmosphere, or at its going out; but that beginning at its entrance, it encreases in every point of its progress. It is also agreed, that the atmospheres of the Comets are very large and dense. He therefore, supposes, that by such time as the light of the sun has passed through a considerable part of the atmosphere of a Comet, the rays thereof are so far refracted towards each other, that they now begin sensibly to illuminate it, or rather the vapours floating therein, and so render that part, which they have yet to pass through, visible to us; and that this portion of the atmosphere of a Comet thus illuminated, appears to us in the the form of a beam of the sun's light, and passes under the denomination of a Comet's tail. This is the hypothesis of Mr. ROWNING: how well it answers the phenomena of the tails, may be seen in his system of natural philosophy, part IV, cap. 11.

We are not to expect that the motions of the Comets can be so exact, and the periods of their revolutions so equal, as those of the planets; considering their great number, and their great distance from the sun in their aphelia, where their actions upon each other must have some effect to disturb their motions. The resistance which they meet with in the atmosphere of the sun, when they descend into the lower parts of their orbits, will also affect them. By the retardation of their motion in these lower parts, their gravity will be enabled to bring them nearer the sun in every revolution, till at length they fall into him, and supply fuel to that immense body of fire. The Comet of 1680 passed at a distance from the surface of the sun, no greater than the 6th part of his diameter; it will approach still nearer in the next revolution, and fall into his body at length. The fixed stars may receive supplies, in the same manner, by Comets falling into them; and some of them, whose light and heat are almost exhausted, may receive new fuel in this way.

The argument against the eternity of the universe, drawn from the decay of the sun, still subsists; and even acquires a new force from this theory of the Comets: since the supply which they afford must have been long ago exhausted, if the world had existed from eternity. The matter in the Comets themselves, that supplies the vapour which rises from them in every revolution to the perihelium, and forms their tails, must also have been exhausted long ere now. In general, all quantities that must be supposed to decrease or increase continually, are

repugnant to the eternity of the world; since the first had been exhausted, and the last had grown into an infinite magnitude, at this time, if the world had been from eternity: and of both kinds there seem to be several sorts of quantities in the universe.

Sir ISAAC NEWTON further observes, that while the Comets move in all parts of the heavens, with different directions, and in very excentric orbs, whose planes are inclined to one another in large angles; it cannot be attributed to blind fate that the planets move round the sun, and the satellites round their respective primaries, all with one direction, in orbits nearly circular, and almost in the same plan. The Comets, by moving in very excentric orbits, descend with a vast velocity, and are carried quickly through the planetary regions, where they approach the nearest to each other, and to the planets, so as to have as little time as possible to disturb their own motions, or those of the planets. By their moving in very different planes, they are carried to a vast distance from each other in the highest parts of their orbits, or aphelia, where, because of the slowness of their motions, and the weakness of the sun's action at so great distances, their mutual actions, but for this precaution, would produce the greatest disorders. Thus we always find, that what has, at first sight, the appearance of irregularity and confusion in nature, is discovered, on further enquiry, to be the best contrivance, and the most wise conduct.




REFLECTIONS

ON THE

General CONFLAGRATION,

AND ON THE

COMING of our SAVIOUR.

 Certainly there is nothing in the whole course of nature, or of human affairs, so great and so extraordinary, as the two last scenes of them, **THE COMING OF OUR SAVIOUR**, and the **BURNING OF THE WORLD**. If we could draw in our minds the pictures of these, in true and lively colours, we should scarce be able to attend to any thing else, or ever divert our imagination from these two objects: For what can more affect us, than the greatest glory that ever was visible upon earth, and at the same time the greatest terror; a God descending at the head of an army of angels, and a burning world under his feet?

These things are truly above expression; and not only so, but so different and remote from our ordinary thoughts and conceptions, that he that comes nearest to a true description of them, shall be looked upon as the most extravagant. 'Tis our unhappiness to be so much used to little trifling things in this life, that when any thing great is represented to us, it appears fantastical, an idea made by some contemplative and melancholy person: I will not venture therefore, without premising grounds out of scripture, to say any thing concerning this glorious appearance; for the coming of our Saviour being wholly out of the way of natural causes, it is reasonable we should take all directions we can from scripture, that we may give a more fitting and just account of that sacred pomp.

I need not mention those places of scripture that prove the second coming of our Saviour in general, or his return again to the earth at the end of the world, (MAT. xxiv. 30, 31. ACTS i. 11. and iii. 20, 21. APOC. i. 7. Heb. ix. 28.) No Christian can doubt of this, 'tis so often repeated in those sacred writings; but the manner and circumstances of this coming, or of this appearance, are the things we now enquire into. And, in the first place we may observe, that the scripture tells us, our Saviour will come in *flaming fire*, and with an *host of mighty angels*; so says St. PAUL to the Thessalonians, *The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with mighty angels; in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not the gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* In the second place, our Saviour says himself, (MAT. xvi. 27.) *The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his*

his Father, with his angels. From which two places we may learn : First, that the appearance of our Saviour will be with flames of fire. Secondly, with an host of angels. Thirdly, in the glory of his Father : By which glory of the Father, I think, is understood that throne of glory represented by DANIEL for the *antient of days*. For our Saviour speaks here to the Jews, and probably in a way intelligible to them ; and the glory of the Father, which they were most likely to understand, would be either the glory wherein God appeared at Mount Sinai, upon the giving of the Law, whereof the apostle speaks largely to the Hebrews ; or that which DANIEL represents Him in at the day of judgment, (Chap. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21.) And this latter being more proper to the subject of our Saviour's Discourse, 'tis more likely this expression refers to it. Give me leave therefore to set down that description of the glory of the Father upon his throne, from the prophet DANIEL, chap. vii. 9. *And I beheld till the thrones were * set, and the antient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool : his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.* With this throne of the glory of the Father, let us, if you please, compare the throne of the Son of God, as it was seen by St. JOHN in the Apocalypse, chap. iv. 2, &c. *And immediately I was in the Spirit : and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat, was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine*

* 'Tis ill rendered in the English, *cast down*.

Sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in appearance like unto an emerald. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices, &c. and before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal.

In these representations you have some beams of the glory of the Father, and of the Son; which may be partly a direction to us, in conceiving the lustre of our Saviour's appearance. Let us further observe, if you please, how external nature will be affected at the sight of God, or of this approaching glory. The scripture often takes notice of this, and in terms very high and eloquent. The Psalmist seems to have loved that subject above others; to set out the greatness of the day of the LORD, and the consternation of all nature, at that time. He throws about his thunder and lightning, makes the hills to melt like wax, at the presence of the LORD, and the very foundations of the earth to tremble, as you may see in the xviiith Psalm, and the xcvith, and the civth, and several others, which are too long to be here inserted. So the prophet HABAKKUK, in his prophetic prayer, chap. iii. hath many ejaculations to the like purpose. And the prophet NAHUM says, *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence: yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

But more particularly, as to the face of nature, just before the coming of our Saviour, hear what the prophet EZEKIEL says upon this subject, chap. xxxviii. 19, 20, 22. *For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken;*
surely

surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel: so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth; and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. — And I will rain an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire and brimstone. The prophet ISAIAH (chap. xxiv. 18, 19, 20.) describes these judgments in terms as high, and relating to the natural world; The windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again. — And St. LUKE, (chap. xxi. 25, 26, 27.) hath set down a great many of them together: Let us hear his words: And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory, &c. These signs all meeting together, help to prepare and make ready a theatre, fit for an angry God to come down upon. The Countenance of the heavens will be dark and gloomy; and

and a veil drawn over the face of the sun. The earth in a disposition every where to break into open flames. The tops of the mountains smoaking; the rivers dry, earthquakes in several places; the sea sunk and retir'd into its deepest channel, and roaring, as against some mighty storm. These things will make the day dead and melancholy, but the night scenes will have more of horror in them. When the *blazing stars* appear, like so many furies, with their lighted torches, threatening to set all on fire. For I do not doubt but the Comets will bear a part in this tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them, at that time; either as to number, or bigness, or nearness to the earth. Besides, the air will be full of flaming meteors, of unusual forms and magnitudes; balls of fire rolling in the sky, and pointed lightnings darted against the earth; mixed with claps of thunder, and unusual noises from the clouds. The moon and the stars will be confused and irregular, both in their light and motions; as if the whole frame of the heavens was out of order, and all the laws of nature were broken or expired.

When all things are in this languishing, or dying posture, and the inhabitants of the earth under the fears of their last end; the heavens will open on a sudden, and the glory of God will appear. A glory surpassing the sun in its greatest radiancy; which, though we cannot describe, we may suppose it will bear some resemblance, or proportion, with those representations that are made in scripture, of God *upon his throne*. This wonder in the heavens, whatsoever its form may be, will presently attract the eyes

eyes of all the Christian world. Nothing can more affect them than an object so unusual, and so illustrious; and that, (probably) brings along with it their last destiny, and will put a period to all human affairs.

Some of the antients have thought, that this coming of our Saviour would be in the dead of the night, and his first glorious appearance in the midst of darkness, 2 Pet. iii. 10. GOD is often described in scripture as light, or fire, with darkness round about him. *He bowed the heavens, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. He made darkness his secret place: Psal. xviii. 9, 11, 12. His pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him, the thick clouds passed. Psal. xcvii. And when GOD appeared upon Mount Sinai, the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven with darkness, clouds and thick darkness, Deut. iv. 11. Or, as the apostle expresses it, with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, Hebr. xii. 18. Light is never more glorious than when surrounded with darkness; and it may be the sun, at that time, will be so obscure, as to make little distinction of day and night. But however this divine light over-bears, and distinguishes itself from common light, though it be at mid-day. 'Twas about noon that the light shined from heaven, and surrounded St. PAUL, Acts xxii. 6. And 'twas on the day-time that St. STEPHEN saw the heavens opened; Acts vii. 55, 56. Saw the glory of GOD, and JESUS standing at the right hand of GOD. This light, which flows from a more vital source, be it day or night, will always be predominant.*

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That appearance of God upon mount Sinai, which we mentioned, if we reflect upon it, will help us a little to form an idea of this last appearance. When God had declared, that he would come down in the sight of the people: The text says, *There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.* If we look upon this mount as an epitome of the earth, this appearance gives us an imperfect resemblance of that which is to come. Hear the several parts, or main strokes of it; first, the heavens and the earth in smoke and fire, then the appearance of a divine glory, and the sound of a trumpet in the presence of angels. But as the second coming of our Saviour is a triumph over his enemies, and an entrance into his kingdom, and is acted upon the theatre of the whole earth; so we are to suppose, in proportion, all the parts and circumstances of it, more great and magnificent.

When therefore this mighty God returns again to that earth, where he had once been ill-treated, not Mount Sinai only, but all the mountains of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, will tremble at his presence. At the first opening of the heavens, the brightness of his person will scatter the dark clouds, and shoot streams of light throughout all the air. But that first appearance, being far from the earth, will seem to be only a great mass of light, with-

without any distinct form; till, by nearer approaches, this bright body shews itself to be an army of angels, with this king of kings for their leader. Then you may imagine how guilty mankind will tremble and be astonished; and while they are gazing at this heavenly host, the voice of the *archangel is heard*, the shrill found of the trumpet reaches their ears, and this gives the general alarm to all the world: *For he cometh, for he cometh*, they cry, *to judge the earth*. The crucified God is returned in glory, to take vengeance upon his enemies: not only upon those that pierced his sacred body, with nails, and with a spear, at Jerusalem; but those that also pierce him every day by their profaneness, and hard speeches, concerning his person, and his religion. Now they see that God, whom they have mocked, or blasphemed, laughed at his meanness, or at his vain threats; they see him, and are confounded with shame, and fear; and in the bitterness of their anguish and despair, call for the mountains to fall upon them, *Isa. ii. 29. Fly into the clefts of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD*; *Rev. vi. 16, 17. and the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.*

As it is not possible for us to express, or conceive the dread, and majesty of this appearance; so neither can we, on the other hand, express the passions and consternation of the people that behold it. These things exceed the measures of human affairs, and of human thoughts; we have neither words, nor comparisons, to make them known by. The greatest pomp and magnificence of the emperors of the

East, in their armies, in their triumphs, in their inaugurations, is but like the sport and entertainment of children, if compared with this solemnity. When God condescends to an eternal glory, with a visible train and equipage; when, from all the provinces of his vast and boundless empire, he summons his nobles, as I may so say, the several orders of angels, and archangels, to attend his person; though we cannot tell the form or manner of his appearance; we know there is nothing in our experience, or in the whole history of this world, that can be a just representation of the least part of it. No armies so numerous as the host of heaven; and in the midst of those bright legions, in a flaming chariot, will sit the Son of Man, when he comes to be glorified in his saints, and triumph over his enemies: and, instead of the wild noises of the rabble, which makes a great part of our worldly state, this blessed company will breath their *ballelujahs* into the open air, and repeated acclamations of *salvation to God, which sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb*, Apoc. vii. 10. *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his CHRIST*, chap. xii. 10.

Imagine all nature now standing in a silent expectation to receive its last doom; tutelary and destroying angels to have their instructions; every thing to be ready for the fatal hour; and then, after a little silence, all the host of heaven to raise their voice, and sing aloud, *LET GOD ARISE, let his enemies be scattered: As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so LET the wicked perish at the presence of God.* And upon this, as upon a
signal

signal given, all the sublunary world breaks into flames, and all the treasures of fire are opened in heaven and in earth.

Thus the conflagration begins. If one should now go about to represent *the world on fire*, with all the confusions that necessarily must be in nature and in mankind upon that occasion, it would seem to most men a romantic scene: yet we are sure there must be such a scene; *The heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and all the works of the earth will be burnt up*: And these things cannot come to pass without the greatest disorders imaginable, both in the minds of men, and in external nature, and the saddest spectacles that eye can behold. We think it a great matter to see a single person burnt alive; here are millions shrieking in the flames at once. 'Tis frightful to us to look upon a great city in flames, and to see the distractions and misery of the people; here is an universal fire through all the cities of the earth, and an universal massacre of their inhabitants. Whatsoever the prophets foretold of the desolations of Judea, Jerusalem, or Babylon, (Isa. xxiv. Jer. li. Lament.) in the highest strains, is more than literally accomplished in this last and general calamity; and those only that are spectators of it, can make its history.

The disorders in nature and the inanimate world will be no less, nor less strange and unaccountable, than those in mankind. Every element, and every region, so far as the bounds of this fire extend, will be in a tumult and a fury, and the whole habitable world running into confusion. A world is sooner destroyed than
made;

made; and nature relapses hastily into that chaos state, out of which she came by slow and leisurely motions: as an army advances into the field by just and regular marches; but when it is broken and routed, it flies with precipitation, and one cannot describe its posture. Fire is a barbarous enemy, it gives no mercy; there is nothing but fury, and rage, and ruin, and destruction, wheresoever it prevails. A storm, or *hurricane*, though it be but the force of air, makes a strange havock where it comes; but devouring flames, or exhalations set on fire, have still a far greater violence, and carry more terror along with them. Thunder and earthquakes are the sons of fire; and we know nothing in all nature more impetuous, or more irresistibly destructive than these two. And accordingly in this last war of the elements, we may be sure, they will bear their parts, and do great execution in the several regions of the world. Earthquakes and subterraneous eruptions will tear the body and bowels of the earth; and thunders and convulsive motions of the air rend the skies. The waters of the sea will boil and struggle with streams of sulphur that run into them; which will make them fume, and smoke, and roar, beyond all storms and tempests; and these noises of the sea will be answered again from the land, by falling rocks and mountains. This is a small part of the disorders of that day.

But 'tis not possible, from any station, to have a full prospect of this last scene of the earth; for 'tis a mixture of fire and darkness. This new temple is filled with smoke, while it is consecrating, and none can enter into it. But
I am

I am apt to think, if we could look down upon this burning world from above the clouds, and have a full view of it, in all parts, we should think it a lively representation of *hell* itself. For fire and darkness are the the two chief things by which that state, or that place, uses to be described; and they are both here mingled together, with all other ingredients that make that tophet that is prepared of old, (Isa. xxx.) Here are lakes of fire and brimstone; rivers of melted glowing matter; ten thousand vulcano's vomiting flames all at once; thick darkness, and pillars of smoke twisted about with wreaths of flame, like fiery snakes; mountains of earth thrown up into the air, and the heavens dropping down in lumps of fire. These things will all be literally true, concerning that day, and that state of the earth. And if we suppose Beelzebub, and his apostate crew, in the midst of this fiery furnace, (and I know not where they can be else;) it will be hard to find any part of the universe, or any state of things, that answers to so many of the properties and characters of *hell*, as this which is now before us.

Let us, to take leave of the subject, reflect, upon this occasion, on the vanity and transient glory of all this habitable world; how, by the force of one element breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of art, all the labours of men are reduced to nothing; all that we admired and adored before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated, or vanished; and another form and face of things, plain, simple, and every where the same, over-spreads the whole earth. Where are now the great empires of the world, and their great imperial

perial cities? Their pillars, trophies, and monuments of glory? Shew me where they stood, read the inscription, tell me the victor's name. What remains, what impressions, what difference or distinction do you see in this mass of fire? Rome itself, *eternal Rome*, the great city, the empress of the world, whose domination and superstition, *antient and modern*, make a great part of the history of this earth; what is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her palaces were strong and sumptuous: *She glorified herself, and lived deliciously; and said in her heart, I fit a queen, and shall see no sorrow.* But her hour is come, she is wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in perpetual oblivion. But 'tis not cities only, and works of men's hands, but the everlasting hills, the mountains and rocks of the earth, are melted as wax before the sun; and *their place is no where found.* Here stood the Alps, a prodigious range of stone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries, and reached their arms from the Ocean to the Black Sea; this huge mass of stone is softened and dissolved, as a tender cloud into rain. Here stood the African mountains, and Atlas with his top above the clouds. There was frozen Caucasus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia. And yonder, towards the North, stood the Riphæan hills, cloathed in ice and snow. All these are vanished, dropt away as the snow upon their heads, and swallowed up in a red sea of fire. (Revel. xv. 3.) *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Hallelujah.*

The



The CONCLUSION.

IF the Conflagration of the world be a reality, as both by scripture and antiquity, we are assured it is; if we be fully persuaded and convinced of this, 'tis a thing of that nature, that we cannot keep it long in our thoughts, without making some moral reflections upon it. 'Tis both great in itself, and of universal concern to all mankind. Who can look upon such an object, *a world in flames*, without thinking with himself whether I shall be in the midst of these flames or no? What is my security, that I shall not fall under this fiery vengeance, which is the wrath of an angry God? St. Peter when he had delivered the doctrine of the Conflagration, makes this pious reflection upon it: 2 Epist. 3. 11. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be, in all holy conversation and godliness.*

If men would learn to contemn this world, it would cure a great many vices at once; and I think St. Peter's argument, from the approaching dissolution of all things, should put us out of conceit with such perishing vanities. Lust and ambition are the two reigning vices of great men; and those little fires might be soon extinguished, if they would frequently and seriously meditate on this last and universal fire, which will put an end to all passions and all contentions.

E

Life

Life eternal is what we all ought to be most solicitous about, the truth of which every reasonable Being must readily acknowledge, and the question we are all concerned in is this, (as man is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather, for two different lives; the one short and transient, the other permanent and lasting) In which of those two lives is our chief interest to make ourselves happy? Or in other words, whether we should endeavour to secure to ourselves the pleasures and gratifications of a life which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmost length of a very inconsiderable duration; or to secure to ourselves the pleasures of a life which is fixed and settled, and will never end? Every man, upon the first hearing of this question, knows very well which side of it he ought to close with. But however right we are in theory, it is plain that in practice we adhere to the wrong side of the question. We make provisions for this life as though it were never to have an end, and for the other life as though it were never to have a beginning.

Should a spirit of superior rank, who is a stranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a survey of its inhabitants; what would his notions of us be? Would not he think that we are a species of beings made for quite different ends and purposes than what we really are? Must not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? would not he think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and station, and title? Nay, would he not believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal punishment, and enjoined
to

to pursue our pleasures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a scheme of duties quite opposite to those which are indeed prescribed to us. And truly, according to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty; and that we keep a steady eye on the end for which we were sent hither.

But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above threescore and ten years; and that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age? How would he be lost in horror and admiration, when he should know that this set of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which scarce deserves the name of existence, when, I say, he should know that this set of creatures are to exist to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater disgrace to reason, than that men who are persuaded of these two different states of beings, should be perpetually employed in providing for a life of threescore and ten years, and neglecting to make provision for that, which after many myriads of years will be still new, and still beginning; especially when we consider that our endeavours for making ourselves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever else we place our happiness in, may after all prove unsuccessful; whereas, if we constantly and sincerely endeavour to make ourselves happy in the other life, we are sure that our endeavours will succeed,

and that we shall not be disappointed of our hope.

The following question is started by one of the Schoolmen. Supposing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or mass of the finest sand, and that a single grain or particle of this sand should be annihilated every thousand years. Supposing then that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious mass of sand was consuming by this slow method till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miserable for ever after; or supposing that you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miserable till the whole mass of sand were thus annihilated at the rate of one sand in a thousand years: which of these two cases would you make your choice?

It must be confessed in this case, so many thousands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, though in reality they do not bear so great a proportion to that duration which is to follow them, as an unite does to the greatest number you can put together in figures, or as one of those sands to the supposed heap. Reason therefore tells us, without any manner of hesitation, which would be the better part in this choice. However, as I have before intimated, our reason might in such a case be so overset by the imagination, as to dispose some persons to sink under the consideration of the great length of the first part of this duration, and of the great distance of that second duration which is to succeed it. The mind I say might give itself up to that happiness which is at hand, considering that it is so very near, and that it would last so very long.

long. But when the choice we have before us is this, whether we will choose to be happy for the space of only three score and ten, nay, perhaps of only twenty or ten years, I might say of only a day or an hour, and miserable to all eternity; or, on the contrary, miserable for this short term of years, and happy for a whole eternity: What words are sufficient to express that folly and want of consideration, which in such a case makes a wrong choice?

Every wise man, therefore, will consider this life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other, and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years to those of eternity.

With the following admired Poem, by the Earl of Roscommon, I shall conclude.

On the LAST JUDGMENT.

I.

THE day of wrath, that dreadful day,
Shall the whole world in ashes lay,
As DAVID and the SYBILS say.

II.

What horror will invade the mind,
When the strict judge, who would be kind,
Shall have few venial faults to find?

III.

The last loud trumpet's wond'rous sound,
Shall through the rending tombs rebound,
And wake the nations under ground.

IV.

IV.

Nature and death shall with surprise,
Behold the pale offender rise,
And view the judge with conscious eyes.

V.

Then shall, with universal dread,
The sacred mystic book be read,
To try the living and the dead.

VI.

The judge ascends his awful throne ;
He makes each secret sin be known,
And all with shame confess their own.

VII.

O then ! what int'rest shall I make,
To save my last important stake,
When the most just have cause to quake ?

VIII.

Thou mighty formidable king,
Thou mercy's unexhausted spring,
Some comfortable pity bring !

IX.

Forget not what my ransom cost,
Nor let my dear bought soul be lost,
In storms of guilty terror tost.

X.

Thou, who for me didst feel such pain,
Whose precious blood the cross did stain,
Let not those agonies be vain.

XI.

XI.

Thou, whom avenging pow'rs obey,
Cancel my debt (too great to pay)
Before the sad accounting day.

XII.

Surrounded with amazing fears,
Whose load my soul with anguish bears,
I sigh, I weep; accept my Tears.

XIII.

Thou, wert mov'd with MARY's grief,
And, by absolving of the thief,
Hast giv'n me hope, now give relief.

XIV.

Reject not my unworthy prayer;
Preserve me from that dang'rous snare,
Which death and gaping hell prepare.

XV.

Give my exalted soul a place
Among thy chosen right-hand race,
The sons of God and heirs of grace.

XVI.

From that insatiable abyfs,
Where flames devour, and serpents hiss,
Promote me to thy seat of bliss.

XVII.

Prostrate, my contrite heart I rend;
My God, my father, and my friend,
Do not forsake me in my end.

XVIII.

XVIII.

Well may they curse their second breath,
Who rise to a reviving death.
Thou great CREATOR of mankind,
Let guilty MAN compassion find.

F I N I S.